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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Considerable media coverage has been given to the state of Uttar Pradesh in the very recent past. Though the developments have largely been political in nature, little had been said about the status of development in the state. The foundations of the ensuing debate have more to do with political alliances and related number crunching, with a conspicuous lack of attention to the issues integral in ensuring a good quality of life for its people. A study¹ on India's most backward districts reveals eye-opening conditions of poverty, hunger and deprivation in much of rural India. The study identified the districts using six measures of socio-economic progress: poverty, hunger, literacy, immunization, IMR and elementary enrollment. Thirteen districts in UP were among the most backward with no district of the state featuring among the best hundred in the country. Clearly issues like adequate access to food, hunger, malnutrition and deprivation have taken a backseat, as always.

Government services and antipoverty programs have the potential to reduce the vulnerability of the poor particularly to ill-health and food deprivation. Most of the social security schemes addressed in this report are driven by the need to ensure greater food accessibility and higher levels of nutrition to its people. The Sampoorn Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) is a wage employment programme, where wages are paid partly in grain and partly in cash. The targeted public distribution system (TPDS) and the Antyodaya Ann Yojana (AAY) implemented through the public distribution system (PDS) were conceived with the hope that it would meet a part of the families grain requirements. Finally, schemes like the old age pension, Annapurna, Midday meal, ICDS and the National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) aim to meet some of the food and nutrition requirements of vulnerable groups like the aged without support, children and pregnant women.

This report draws from both primary and secondary sources. A considerable amount of time was spent interacting with villagers and block level officials. Accounts of reports sent from grassroots organizations operating in different parts of the state have also been used. The aim is to identify issues that hamper the proper implementation of various food related schemes under the ambit of the Commissioners of the Supreme Court². The purpose is three fold; to disseminate basic information about the schemes, to see how far the Courts orders have been implemented and to

¹"District Level Deprivation in the New Millennium", Bibek Debroy and Laveesh Bhandari

² Dr NC Saxena and Mr SR Sankaran were appointed Commissioners of the Supreme Court to monitor the implementation of nine food and employment related social security schemes, by an order dated November 28 2001 (Civil writ petition 196/ 2001, PUCLvs UoI).

wherever possible supplement available state level data with realities of implementation from the field. In January 2003 Dr Saxena visited the district of Chandauli. This was followed by a week long visit to Barabanki by a team representing the Commissioners in July. This district has been identified as one of the poorest districts in the state with a poverty ratio of 50.2%³. In particular three villages of Pindsawa, Basara and Nindura⁴ were toured for this purpose. The villages were selected keeping in mind time constraints and their accessibility by road. At a distance of 30 Kms from the state capital at Lucknow, all three were well connected by road. Attention was also given to the fact that in Uttar Pradesh there is a system of identifying villages as being 'Ambedkar' which entitles them to benefits not conferred to Non Ambedkar villages⁵. Of the three villages visited only Pindsawa has been declared an Ambedkar village. An attempt was also made to examine whether the implementation of the schemes differed across these two categories in a systematic manner.

Uttar Pradesh presents an irony of sorts. The figures for procurement and storage of grain reveal that there is considerable stock available for distribution. As far as procurement goes UP is second only to Punjab and Haryana in contributing to the Central pool of foodgrain stocks. In the period April to July 2003 GoUP procured 12.13 lakh tonnes of wheat and 13.6 lakh tonnes of rice, none of which has been handed over to the FCI⁶. Even the grain lifted for distribution in the state is above that reported for all India. Concurrent with this situation of adequate stocks is the lack of availability for those it is intended to benefit. Delay in granting sanctions, leakage of grain meant for welfare schemes and corruption has eroded severely the benefits that are supposed to accrue from these schemes. Adequate production clearly does not guarantee adequate consumption without an efficient distribution system.

What emerges from this field visit to the district of Barabanki, is the lack of political and administrative will to ensure that the resources spent on many of the welfare schemes benefit s

³"Report of the Task Force on Identification of Districts for Wage and Employment Programmes", Planning Commission, May 2003

⁴ All these villages are part of Nindura Block

⁵ Villages with a majority population of scheduled castes were deemed as 'Ambedkar. This was to allow for easy identification of those areas that required immediate attention as far as social development of its people is concerned.' It is said that these are one of the first villages for which funds under several social security programmes particularly the SGRY are sanctioned.

⁶ Monthly Foodgrain Bulletin, July 2003, MoFCA

those who need it most. The lack of monitoring and evaluation reduces accountability, which has led to widespread corruption across most of the schemes studied⁷.

⁷ This seems to hold for much of the state. A similar conclusion was reached when large parts of Eastern UP were surveyed. "Social and Economic Determinants of Poverty in India's Poorest Regions: Qualitative and Quantitative Assessments", Abstract World Bank Study, December 1999

SECTION II: THE SGRY IN OPERATION

Conceived in late 2001 this scheme primarily aims at creating additional wage employment for the rural poor. A secondary objective is the creation of durable community assets in rural areas. Allocations are made both in cash and grain with releases being made in two installments. The cost of funds is shared between the center and the states with foodgrains being provided free of cost to the states. The scheme consists of two streams. The Ist stream is implemented by the district and block panchayats whereas the village panchayats are the sole implementing agency for the IInd stream.

The important role that can be played by anti poverty programmes aimed at generating employment has been reiterated a number of times. The potential of SGRY, Food for work and other relief employment works particularly in the scenario of a near collapse of employment growth during the 1990's cannot be emphasized enough. A decline in the growth of agricultural output has already put severe pressure on the available rural employment opportunities. Recent data also indicates negative employment elasticity in agriculture for many states including UP, over the period 1993-94 to 1999 - 2000⁸. Amidst such a scenario the importance of a large scale employment generating programme like the SGRY is immense. However macro indicators and field visits made suggests that the scheme is not being implemented properly in Uttar Pradesh.

The following section evaluates the schemes using both available state level data and the reality from the field. This primarily draws on all the SGRY projects implemented in Pindsawa in the financial year 2002-2003. Shortage of time did not permit a detailed investigation of SGRY works in the other villages visited. The implementation of this scheme is riddled with problems and irregularities right from the time of selection of projects to their subsequent monitoring. Problems like extensive use of machines, low quality of works constructed, corruption in works, non-implementation of works as per guidelines appears to be widespread. Some of these and other issues have been discussed in detail below.

⁸ This is a new development because till recently output growth was associated with a high growth in employment. The other states where increasing output is being achieved with relatively little increase in employment are AP and Kerala. [Rural employment and Poverty, strategies to eliminate rural poverty within a generation] G.S Bhalla and Peter Hazell, EPW Special Article August 16-22, 2003

Non-Utilization of Funds: For the state as a whole the funds utilized as a proportion of that allotted presents a dismal picture. For the year 2002-2003, only 68% and 74% of the total funds allotted under stream I and II respectively, were utilized⁹. The total lifting of foodgrains under SGRY II during 2002-03 was also not satisfactory. Against a total availability of more than 5.01 lakh tonnes, actual lifting by the GoUP was only 3.51 lakh tones. For grain that is technically distributed free of cost to the states, 70% offtake as a proportion of that allotted is inexecutable and goes to show the apathy shown by the state bureaucracy to the plight of the poor. In addition, the state received an allocation of 2 lakh tonnes during 2002-03 under SGRY Special Component, against which only 0.78 lakh tonnes was used, a paltry 39%. Such non-utilization of funds has wider implications. Rules laid down by the Department of Rural Development clearly establish that the carryover funds cannot exceed 15% of the funds and foodgrains available for the year, after which cuts will be imposed. This only leads to lower availability of funds for those who require it most.

An important reason for funds remaining unutilized is the delay in allocations and releases made by the state. It seems that a clear differentiation is made between Ambedkar villages and those that are not. **As on July 2003, allocation for the current year had been made only for 26% of the villages (all Ambedkar) in Nindura block** ¹⁰. This resulted in a negligible number of SGRY works actually being undertaken in the first four months of the current financial year. Moreover the states share for the current financial year in both streams was yet to be released as on July 2003¹¹. Delay in releases implies delay in utilization of funds. This has adverse implications for the submission of proposals for the second installment, which crucially depends on the amount utilized in the first. The later the funds are released the later the proposal is submitted. This increases the risk of inviting progressive deductions in the amounts released by the center as second installment. **It is therefore imperative that funds are used on time and in a regular fashion.**

A consequence of poor utilization of funds in several of the states districts was the non-implementation of the Supreme Court Order that SGRY be doubled during the three distress months between April-July 2003. This order had been passed keeping in mind the severe

⁹ All the data regarding SGRY and pertaining to the state as a whole has been taken from returns obtained from the DoRD, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi. For the current financial year the details available were till July 2003.

¹⁰ This was the information provided by an officer at the Block office.

¹¹ Other states like MP, Maharashtra, AP, Karnataka had released a part of their state share under both streams according to returns filed till July 2003

drought that had affected large parts of the country last year. Correspondence with concerned officials at the Ministry of Rural Development revealed that additional resources would be allocated to only those districts that had utilized their existing quotas. Clearly this was not found to have happened in the case of Uttar Pradesh.

Irregular Supply Of Foodgrain: The supply of funds and foodgrains to the districts has been grossly inadequate, which has hampered the possibility of undertaking works under the programme. The DM of Lucknow told Dr Saxena that wheat had not been supplied to the district for the first three months of the current financial year. Considering the stocks of foodgrain that are available in the states godowns, a situation where wheat is not available in the capital district should not arise. At the state level only 66% and 49% (under the two streams) of the foodgrains lifted have been utilized during the first three months of the current financial year. For the rest even though the grain has been released by the center, it is yet to reach the interiors of the state.

Little Benefit for Priority Groups: The guidelines lay down special safeguards so that some proportion of the funds are spent for the benefit of SC/ST and women. Central norms have stipulated that atleast 30% of the employment opportunities be reserved for women. However the employment generated for women was miniscule even when compared to other states in the country. Only 10% of the total employment generated, benefited women. This was clearly evident even in the villages visited. **According to the muster rolls given to the team, none of the works undertaken in Pindsawa had employed women.**

Moreover, the guidelines have directed all states to spend atleast 50% of the annual allocation under SGRY II for creating need based village infrastructure in SC/ST wards. In the year 2002-2003 this rule were flouted for the state as a whole. The percentage of works completed exclusively for SC/ST was only 30% of all the works undertaken in the state.

Selection Of Projects: The works constructed under SGRY seem to be undertaken with little planning and with a near absence of any technical or economic sanctions. An official in the Block office admitted that projects are often started without prior approvals of any kind. Once the sanctions are received relevant documents are post dated to match the dates as per the sanctions approved. It was seen to be true of the only SGRY I project in Pindsawa¹² for which a detailed

¹² Tiketganj Babaganj road passing Rajarams house to Pindsawa village

investigation was possible. It was also seen to hold for the project in operation at Basara¹³. The work in Pindsawa had not been approved by the normal scheme of things. It had been undertaken in place of another work, which had been sanctioned by the DRDO. This had been replaced on the authority of the BDO without the approval of the DRDO. It would help explain why the estimates and sanctions were made after the work had already started. Officials at the block office were however unable to tell why the sanctioned project was cancelled. The work in Basara had been in construction for the last two months with the process of obtaining sanctions still not complete. The team could therefore not be given any of the relevant documents, project estimates or figures.

Central norms clearly state that priority must be given to infrastructure works that support agriculture activities, education, health, roads etc. These works must be part of an Annual Action Plan passed by the gram sabha. The list of works permitted is diverse to help ensure that works undertaken really prove to be community assets. All the works undertaken under SGRY II were either mud roads or drains, when there was a clear need for other public works in the village. Further no gram sabha approval had been taken for the works implemented. As per information provided by the villagers no gram sabha meeting had taken place due to rivalry among the panch members, some of whom had been part of the support group of the previously elected pradhan. Adherence to procedural rules and details must be emphasized. It can reduce the possibility of corruption and ensure to some degree that the assets constructed are required, productive and feasible.

Material vs Labour Costs: The guidelines are clear on the permissible distribution of funds between labour and material costs. The former includes the value of both the grain and cash distributed as payments for labour services. The permissible distribution of 60:40, labour to material ratio had not been maintained in the proposal for works scheduled to be undertaken under SGRY I. The Adhyaksh of the Zilla Panchayat had made a written comment recording this fact. The comment pertained to the proposal of works due to be undertaken for the entire block in the year 2002-2003. Though the rule was not flouted in the only work investigated it remains to be seen whether it held true for the block as a whole. If it does it is a clear example of how greater vigilance can lead to adherence to norms.

¹³ The link road from Ganesh Yadavs house to the Chouraha at Basara

In the case of SGRY II the permitted ratio of 80:20 as labour and material costs respectively was not complied with in most of the works undertaken in Pindsawa last year. (A list of works for which the division could be established is given in table 1 below) When asked why this rule was being openly flouted, the secretary of Pindsawa panchayat confessed he had no knowledge that such a safeguard existed. He further added that the division of funds had been approved by the authorities concerned. He even gave a list of works that had been constructed using only tractors and trolleys. These works had generated no employment for the residents of Pindsawa panchayat. If the amount spent as payments for such machines had been used to employ labour instead, it could have provided 975¹⁴ more man-days of employment in the year.

Table 1: Violation of permissible levels that can be spent on material costs for works undertaken under SGRY II in Pindsawa (2002-2003)

Description of Work	Material Cost (Rs.)	Labour Cost* (Rs.)	Labour cost as % of total cost	Remarks
In Gangepur Babagunj road to Gangepur (mud work)	3,043	4,640	61%	
In Paltapur link road construction (mud work)	2,000	5,250	72%	
Repair of link road from gandhi tree to Tulsis house in Pindsawa	2,072	4292	67%	
Madhavs house to Chandrimas house. Repair of mud road	7,050	0	0%	Done by tractor trolley
Vijay maharajas house to Satrohans house	5,100	0	0%	Done by tractor trolley

¹⁴ Total expenditure to contractors employing these machines was Rs 56,550. The employment creating potential of such expenditure has been calculated using the minimum wage of Rs. 58 per day

(mud work)				
Babaganj road to Munnu lals house (mud work)	5,250	0	0%	Done by tractor trolley
Annus house to Jiyauddins house (mud work)	10,200	0	0%	Done by tractor trolley. (Official returns show that Rs 15,300 has been spent though receipts for only Rs 10,200 were shown to the team)
All drains constructed which are mentioned in official returns filed and seen on the ground	54,755	36,992	40%	(Only masons were paid. The rest was done by voluntary labour. However for purposes of this table, labour costs as per returns filed have been taken. Although it is likely to result in an overestimate of the labour component)

*Note: * labour cost has been calculated depending on the amount of employment created for the residents of Pindsawa. Since funds were allocated for the people of this panchayat it is the logical term of reference*

Quality of Works: A secondary objective of the scheme is to ensure durable social and economic community assets which facilitate infrastructure development in rural areas. However inspection of works carried out under SGRY II in Pindsawa indicates that works are not undertaken with this objective in mind. The visit to the village coincided with the coming of the rains and it became possible to evaluate just how useful the assets constructed in the previous year proved to be. Most of the mud roads were not fit to be used and the drains lay broken mid way¹⁵. These

¹⁵ Compromises in the quality of works can be done in several ways. Informal discussions at the block office revealed that though sanctions might be obtained for 'kharanja' (bricks placed upright or vertical) roads the actual one built would be a 'patanja' (bricks placed horizontal). This saves the number of bricks required to construct the road fully. The money thus saved can be pocketed by those involved. Similar logic would hold for drains or roads not constructed as per the sanctioned length.

were also not of the designated length as mentioned in the returns filed. Most of them started from handpumps and ended in the middle of a road or in front of some hut, defeating the purpose of providing proper drainage for the village as a whole. In places poor quality of works constructed meant that the drains had broken mid way leaving little scope for effective drainage. The photographs given below are evidence of the lack of commitment to the construction of quality infrastructure.

Table 2: Corruption And Fudging Of Muster Roll In Work Undertaken Under SGRY 1* In**Pindsawa**

	Father's Name	Village	No of days worked according to the muster roll	No of days worked according to labourer	Amount received as per Muster Roll		Amount re
					Cash	Grain (Kg)	labourer
	Shankar	Pindsawa	30	9	465	255	36
	Dhaniram	Pindsawa	30	4	465	255	16
	Bhagoti	Pindsawa	30	10	465	255	40
	Rambharose	Pindsawa	30	10	465	255	40
am	Meykhu	Pindsawa	30	4	465	255	16
	Ramvikas	Pindsawa	30	10	465	255	40
	Arish	Paltupur	30	20	465	255	80
are	Sarju	Paltupur	15	9	232.50	127.50	36
	Parshuram	Paltupur	30	1	465	255	2
	Ramlal	Paltupur	15	3	232.50	127.50	12
mar	Bhimak	Paltupur	30	1	465	255	3
	Eshari	Paltupur	30	10	465	255	35
l	Tilak	Paltupur	30	0	465	255	
sh	Babu	Paltupur	30	7	465	255	28
m	Molehram	Paltupur	30	1	465	255	3
			420	99	6510	3570	387

*Note: * Tiketganj Babaganj road passing Rajarams house to Pindsawa village*

Source: personal interviews, Field Visit in July 2003

Use of Machines: A reason often put forward to explain the decline in the growth of employment in the agriculture sector is the increasing capitalization of activities in the sector. Cost of cultivation for some of the major crops shows that the man-hours used per hectare has declined over time¹⁶. A large part of this is due to a rise in the use of machines such as tractors for many activities that can be performed using human labour. However when the pervasive use of such labour displacing machines invades a scheme that is meant to create employment the issue clearly needs to be addressed.

According to the secretary of Pindsawa panchayat the total amount spent on employing tractors and trolley's was Rs 56,550¹⁷. Out of the four SGRY II works implemented in Pindsawa¹⁸, two¹⁹ had been completed using tractors and trolleys. The secretary of the panchayat even gave a list of works²⁰ that had been completed using such machines. On all these projects no employment was generated for the villagers of Pindsawa. These machines had been made to dig mud, to transport it and to finally lay it on the road. A majority of this amount had been used to carry mud over distances for which the villagers were prepared to do so. In some others where the distances were greater than 500 metres, the secretary claimed that no labour was forthcoming under the prevailing payment norms. This brings into focus the crucial question of selection of works again. Projects that are not labour intensive should not be undertaken at all especially in a wage employment scheme. The secretary cited the villagers disagreement to carry mud over long distances to justify the use of such labour displacing machines. One such road was shown to the Commissioners team, however further inquiries revealed that the mud for the construction of this road had been taken from a distance of less than 100 metres.

The rampant use of machines in wage employment schemes had already been brought to the notice of the state administration. The Commissioners had sent letters on several occasions had along with recommendations of the feasible course of action (see table 11). However repeated suggestions of banning or restricting their use, appears to have fallen on deaf ears.

¹⁶“Rural employment and Poverty, Strategies to eliminate Rural Poverty within a Generation”, G.S Bhalla and Peter Hazell, EPW Special Article August 16-22, 2003

¹⁷ Receipts showing payments for tractors were also seen

¹⁸ As per returns filed and obtained from the block office and shown to the team

¹⁹ Link road from Babagunj road to Gangepur and the road from Annus house to Jiyauddins house

²⁰ Given in annexure 7

Fudging Muster Rolls: Close evaluation of the works completed under SGRY in the last financial year in Pindsawa revealed huge discrepancies in the muster rolls.²¹ The payments made and the number of days worked had been exaggerated in the muster rolls of all the works undertaken.

The team was able to meet most of individuals mentioned on the muster roll for the sole SGRY I project²² undertaken in Pindsawa. However the muster roll for this project contained names from a village called Dadera, which does not belong to Pindsawa gram panchayat. Of the 41 names mentioned in the muster roll, 15 belonged to the most distant hamlet of Paltupur and 7 were residents of Dadera. Villagers spoken to confirmed that in all probability the names are likely to be false since residents typically do not travel over such long distances for work on a daily basis. This is often done to ensure that verification becomes difficult making detailed investigation a distant possibility. Moreover none of the labourers spoken to remembered any worker who was not a resident of the same panchayat working on this project.

It is also conceivable that these individuals worked for a few days but the figure was exaggerated on the muster roll as was done in numerous other cases. The team was able to talk to fifteen labourers who had worked on this project, but the same story emerged each time. According to the muster roll each worker had worked for an average of 30 days. However no one the team met had worked for a period greater than 10²³. Muster rolls also showed the payment of grain and cash when infact no grain at all had been distributed. Estimates made therefore suggest that more than Rs 48,500 remains unaccounted for²⁴.

A clear sign of corruption and consequent fudging of muster rolls was evident in the case of the drains constructed under SGRY II in Pindsawa. Muster rolls for these works duly filled had been given to the investigating team. However conversations with the villagers revealed that most of the drains had been constructed using 'Shram Dan' (voluntary labour)²⁵. Payments had been

²¹ Muster rolls are official documents used to record details of employment generated and wages paid at work sites. Typically these contain details like the name of the worker, the number of days worked, payments disbursed, signature or thumb impressions etc. When corruption takes place more often than not it can be traced to these documents. They are fudged in such cases either by showing expenditures greater than have actually been incurred or by exaggerating the amount of employment generated. For the reasons just specified these are often heavily guarded documents with little public access.

²² Tiketganj Babaganj road passing Rajarams house to Pindsawa village

²³ See table 2 for more details

²⁴ See table 3 for more details

²⁵ A copy of an affidavit in acknowledgment of the above is given in Annexure 10

made only to the masons employed and for the purchase of bricks used in the construction of these drains. It seems therefore that large amounts of funds have been appropriated by those involved. According to the muster rolls prepared for these works Rs 14,196 in cash and 1,781 Kg. of grain had been distributed when in actual fact this was not true²⁶. When valued at Rs 5 for a kilogram of grain (much lower than the market price) the amount of money that remains unaccounted for is close to Rs 23,000 in the construction of drains alone. This could have provided a family of five with two square meals for an additional 1840 days²⁷.

Lastly all the thumb impressions on the muster rolls appear to have been fudged since no worker conceded to putting such a form of acknowledgment on any document. Some of them who had worked on the SGRY I project even said they were capable of signing when infact a thumb impression acknowledging payment had been made along their name.

Fudging Grain Coupons: In UP payments in kind are made to workers by distributing coupons at work sites. The coupons can then be exchanged for grain from the local PDS dealer. Information from the block warehouses revealed that the requisite grain had been lifted for distribution. However as mentioned earlier no grain was given to the workers. All payments for labour services were made in cash. Therefore it would logically mean that coupon booklets shown to the team had been fabricated. All efforts to meet the PDS dealers in Basara and Pindsawa to verify the allegations made against them, had failed.

Non-Payment of Minimum Wages: As per norms laid down by the state authorities, Rs 58 per day is the minimum wage that must be paid at all public work sites. This can be paid partly in cash and partly in grain. Due to corruption in the distribution of the grain component, no worker in Pindsawa ever received more than Rs 40 per day in total. Thus not only were they denied their entitlement of grain but as a consequence received much less than the prescribed minimum wage. This phenomenon was not restricted to Pindsawa alone. Villagers of Nindura receive an average of Rs 30 per day and those in Basara in the range of Rs 30-40 per day depending on whether they are paid by task or time rate. As in Pindsawa they have also never received grains as payment for work done.

²⁶ See table 3 for more details

²⁷ Assuming an average family of five consumes around 2.5 Kg in a day.

Table 3: Fudging of Muster rolls under SGRY works undertaken in the year 2002-2003 in**Pindsawa Panchayat**

Name of Work	Nature of Work	Mandays created as per muster rolls	Mandays created based on our estimation	Payment made as per muster rolls		Payments made based on interviews with labour		Remarks
				Cash (Rs)	Grain (kg)	Cash (Rs)	Grain (kg)	
I								
Babaganj Road g Rajarams house Pindsawa village	Construction of (Kharanja) Brick Road	953	225*	17,039	8,100	9000**	0	For more details see page 2
II								
Morya's house with pond	Construction of Drain (nali)	88	16^	3,136	528	800^	0	Mentioned in muster roll but not filed with the muster roll however the muster roll does not contain the signature of the pradhan and has to be a forged signature. Constructed using muster roll labour.
Tree to Tulsis	Repair of link road	74	0	2,072	444	0	0	Work not shown in muster roll. Investigating the matter. It is likely a ghost project.
Surva Samparg	Repair of link (brick) road							
Lal House via Marg II to pond	Construction of Drain (nali)	40	10^	1540	240	500^	0	Constructed using muster roll labour
S's door	Repair of wells	36	0	1512	216	0	0	The only well shown in muster roll is one in front of S's door which also was dug by villagers was dug last FY. Most of the work was done in this project
S's door								
S's door								
Uddin's house to Panchayat Bhawan	Construction of Drain (nali)	126	36^	5040	756	1800^	0	Mentioned in muster roll but not filed with the muster roll however does not have stamp of the pradhan what appears to be a signature.
Manohar's house with pond	Construction of Drain (nali)	40	10^	1540	240	500^	0	Constructed using muster roll labour
Babaganj road to Gandhi	Repair of link road	123	0	3444	730	0	0	Not mentioned in muster roll by the team. The muster roll for this work was not submitted. Therefore not shown in muster roll.

Shahadur's house to	Construction of Drain (nail)	130	20^	4480	780	1000^	0	Present in of however const voluntary labo muster roll doe reference numbe of the pradhan appears to b signature.
pur Samparg marg	Construction of mud link road (mitti patai ka kam)	80	0	2240	480	0	0	Not mentioned the team by the muster roll reference num project was su team were there this work.
		1,690	317	42,043	12,514	13,600	0	

Note: * authors calculations Verification of fifteen names revealed that of the 420 days written on the muster roll, only 99 man days were actually created. The same ratio has been taken for the larger picture. Also see table 2 for verification exercise. ** according to labourers they were paid @ Rs 40 per day and no grain. ^ The only payments made for drains constructed were to the masons employed. The number of days mentioned in the muster roll has been taken. For payments this is used to value the services of the masons@ Rs 50 per day.

Source: Field Visit in July 2003

Evidence of Ghost projects: There is considerable evidence of ghost projects in SGRY II works undertaken in Pindsawa. These are projects that 'exist' on paper but are never actually undertaken. A general survey of the schemes being implemented in the village, conversations with villagers and the poor state of records maintained all indicated the same thing.

According to the official returns filed with the block office, ten odd works had been implemented under SGRY II²⁸. This list was corroborated with a list of works given to the team by the secretary on an earlier occasion²⁹. These were significantly different from the ones mentioned in the official returns. A comprehensive survey of each work undertaken in the last year was also carried out with the secretary and the pradhans husband³⁰. Out of the six projects undertaken on 'paper' and listed in the returns filed by the panchayat secretary only four³¹ were shown to the visiting team. This was despite repeated requests that all works undertaken in the previous year must be shown. Subsequent conversations with villagers revealed that a majority of the works shown to the investigative team had been done in years prior to 2002-2003. This seemed to be true particularly of many of the mud roads constructed.

Several other instances elucidated below seemed to indicate that the projects shown to the team had not been implemented in the last financial year. Residents of Paltupur comprising mostly of Harijans said that no work had been undertaken in the last few years. Despite this the team were shown three works³² by the secretary that were apparently implemented in that village in the last year. Analysis of the works shown and subsequent comparison of those existing on paper would indicate that close to Rs. 70,000 in a single year remains unaccounted for.

Even requests to see the rough copies of accounts maintained in rough could not be produced. The 'rough' copies shown were ones that had been 'manufactured' the night before the visit, for the purposes of inspection. Needless to say all the details had been copied from the muster rolls

²⁸ Copy given in Annexure 5

²⁹ Copy given in Annexure 6

³⁰ The pradhans seat is reserved for a woman candidate. However for all practical purposes it appeared that her husband took care of the matters of the village including keeping records of all works and wages disbursed under the wage employment schemes implemented by the Gram Panchayats. A considerable amount of information dealing with other schemes like NFBS and the distribution of grain through the PDS was also received from him.

³¹ Construction of two drains: one from Nandlal Morya's house to North pond and the second from Kamruddin's house to Panchayat Bhawan and two mud link roads: one from Babagunj road to Gangepur and the second from Annus house to Jiyauddins house

³² See work serial numbers 1, 3 and 6 in annexure 7

and for all practical purposes nothing could be established from this fabricated document. This in large part confirmed the suspicions that many projects had not been implemented at all and consequently therefore no records could be made available to the Commissioners team.

Lack of Proper Documentation: The prevailing system of documentation particularly the system of maintaining accounts under SGRY II needs urgent attention. Officials at the block office reported that in many cases completion certificates for works under SGRY I would not be available. They further added that muster rolls are often filled after the project is over though the rules clearly state that these must be filled every week.

With respect to works implemented under SGRY II, neither the secretary nor the 'pradhan' could provide accurate copies of the required documents they are supposed to maintain. Poor documentation of the ones given made it extremely difficult to ascertain which works had indeed been undertaken and which had not.

Further some of the muster rolls did not have the stamp of the pradhan or a reference serial number. Of the four works that did not have the stamp of the pradhan,³³ three were muster rolls for drains 'constructed' in the last year. These were the same drains for which payments had actually not been made. It appears therefore that lack of proper documentation following guidelines abets the misuse of funds.

Box 1: Corruption in the 'Food for Work Programmes' in Mau District, UP*

Reports of corruption have been received from the Fathepur Mandav block of Mau District where rice received for several wage employment schemes has been allegedly siphoned off in the black market. The district received a total of 81,750 quintals of rice for the year 2002-2003 for FFW and 26,858 quintals of wheat for Drought Relief Programmes. Unfortunately, officials feel that a scam in the entire district has rid both schemes from much of the available grain.

For the FY 2002-2003 the workers in the district have received only the cash component of their wages with hardly any grain. On an average, about 100 kg of rice is due to every worker under the scheme. From the 584,5 quintals of rice that had been issued to the Senior Marketing

³³ See annexure 9.1, 9.5, 9.8, 9.9 for copies of the muster rolls in question

Inspector Madhuban, only 2470 quintals has been allocated to the Gram Panchayats for distribution among workers in works undertaken by them. Take the case of Amma village whose pradhan says that over 10,000 kilos of rice is still due to workers under various schemes. Both Garju and Birju worked in the SGRY works, for which over 100 kilos is still due to each of them. As a result no SGRY or other development work can be undertaken. According to him most of the official documents submitted including the muster rolls are fudged and in many cases the later has been filled using names from the electoral roll. The pradhan of Dubari village has a similar tale to tell. The panchayat owes about 150 quintals of rice as wage payments to workers. As a result close to Rs2,56,000 remains unspent in SGRY since no worker is willing to provide his labour services till existing wage arrears are cleared. In works done by the Kshetra Panchayat out of a total of 8263 quintals of rice allotted only 2471 quintals has been distributed. The balance in both cases seems to have disappeared. According to local media reports dated 17th May 2003 it is alleged that 86000 quintals of rice was transported illegally to Bihar between 15th to 31st March 2003, creating a potential scam of about 11 crore rupees.

Another case of fraud has been detected in the manufacture of the coupons by which grain is distributed at work sites. According to guidelines issued by the Secretary, Department of Rural Development GoUP, the size of the coupon should be 27 x 9 centimetres and should be made on durable paper. At the office of the BDO in Madhuban however the coupons issued, measured 15x 10.5 centimeter. It is possible that the district authorities have made money out of this as well. Clearly greater investigation is needed to ensure that beneficiaries are not deprived of their entitlements.

* Adapted from a submission "Where has the rice gone from the food for Work Programme in Mau district of UP", by V.B.Rawat

Lack of Monitoring: The guidelines clearly state that both a financial and physical audit must be carried out at the district level. This is to be followed by the submission of an action taken report on the auditor's findings and a social audit if possible. It appears however that one person alone from the block office, the ADO, is assigned to check the accounts of works constructed under SGRY II. According to the secretary of Pindsawa gram panchayat, a "social audit" comprising of just the ADO and himself had been conducted. No verification had been done of the works

constructed in Pindsawa. This was evident from the absence of the signatures of the monitoring authorities on the returns obtained from the block office³⁴.

Officials at the block office at Nindura, even admitted that the monthly progress reports are often updated simply by looking at the plans made in the beginning of the year³⁵. This is done in a completely ad-hoc manner, with no verification checks at the time of compilation of block level reports, to ensure that returns filed are accurate. There appears to be little emphasis on monitoring. Most of the rules were flouted by the secretary incharge of undertaking works under SGRY. Even the rule regarding permissible expenditure on maintenance of public works created was not adhered to³⁶. In Pindsawa according to returns filed by the secretary more than 27% of the allotted funds were used in repair of drains, wells and roads.

Diversion of funds occur in large part due to a lack of adequate monitoring which robs the system of all accountability. The prevailing system of monitoring leaves far too much control in the hands of a few, which as in the case of Pindsawa could lead to misappropriation of funds.

³⁴ See Annexures 5 and 8 for more details

³⁵ It appears that works conducted under SGRY II do not require estimates/ sanctions or completion certificates. Only monthly progress reports stating the amount of funds used is required to be submitted at the block headquarters

³⁶ Central norms lay down that not more than 15% of the funds allocated for every village panchayat can be spent on maintenance of existing public works

SECTION III: FOOD RELATED SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES

The food insecurity and resulting nutrition deficiency faced by many of the poor in Uttar Pradesh is well documented. Despite the improvement in child survival in recent years 55.5% of the children are chronically stunted and 51.7% are malnourished. Social indicators for women do not paint a better picture. The maternal mortality rate in the state is 707 compared to the national average of 407. Analysis based on body mass index reveals that more than one third of the women in UP are undernourished with nutritional deficiency particularly high among rural areas and women of disadvantaged groups³⁷. This is why it is absolutely imperative that social security schemes like the public distribution system, the ICDS and midday meal are implemented properly since they aim to address the needs of precisely these vulnerable groups.

In a study³⁸ conducted among all the antipoverty programs, the Public Distribution System was cited most often as being essential to the well-being of the poor. However, discrepancies in the availability of services is evident from reports that suggest only 43% of the poorest 20% of the households surveyed had access to a PDS fair price shop³⁹. The same study also reported that only 38% of one fifth of the poorest households had access to an anganwadi with the number increasing to 60% in the case of the wealthiest 20%⁴⁰. On a positive note it seems that only the aged destitute are receiving relief from the central schemes administered. Of all the schemes studied, old age and widow pensions and Annapurna are relatively better implemented than many of the others. However the field visit revealed that the coverage of all the schemes is extremely limited. Several cases of many eligible and deserving individuals not receiving benefits under several existing programmes were encountered⁴¹.

ANTYODAYA ANN YOJANA

The AAY was launched in December 2000 for the purpose of ensuring some degree of food security to the poorest of the poor. It was meant to help that section of the population that was

³⁷ Source of figures: various editions of NFHS data 1998-99, census 2001, fact sheet UP

³⁸ "Social and Economic Determinants of Poverty in India's Poorest Regions: Qualitative and Quantitative Assessments", Abstract World Bank Study, December 1999

³⁹ The number of reported ration shops in UP stood at 74,354 on April 2002. Given the population these shops serve essentially an average of 523 cards per FPS. Source: Monthly Foodgrain Bulletin

⁴⁰ "Poverty in India: the challenge of UP", World Bank 2001

⁴¹ It also appears that they are several groups in society who are excluded from the existing safety net by virtue of their social and legal status. Though greater amount of investigation needs to be done for a preliminary identification of such groups see box 3.

unable to get two square meals a day on a sustained basis throughout the year. According to the guidelines all Antyodaya beneficiaries are entitled to 35 kilos of grain every month at the subsidized price of Rs. 2 per kg of wheat and Rs. 3 per kg of rice. The number of cards issued in the state of Uttar Pradesh is the highest in the country and forms close to 17% of the total number of cards distributed⁴². Proper implementation of the scheme could therefore benefit a large number of people.

Mis-Appropriation of Grain: When compared to the national average the off-take of grain as a proportion of allotment in Uttar Pradesh is above those that have been reported for the country as a whole. It stood at over 96% and 100% for rice and wheat respectively against the all India average of 83% and 89%. It is a pity therefore that the grain is not reaching the intended beneficiaries.

At the field level, diversion of grain to the black market between the time it is lifted from the state warehouses till it is distributed cannot be ruled out. When it is distributed, beneficiaries often receive less than the prescribed amount of 35 kilos, are overcharged for this amount and receive their entitlements irregularly once every two or three months⁴³. In Pindsawa grain is lifted for 83 beneficiaries every month but the list of names given to the Commissioners team had details for 79⁴⁴. Even within the names given some beneficiaries had left the village and some had no idea that they were entitled to Antyodaya benefits. Where the grain for the rest is being appropriated is a moot question. However details of lifting reveal that grain for 83 beneficiaries is being taken from the state warehouses. (Also see table given below). A similar picture holds for the other villages as well with lifting close to 100%. Therefore there is no reason why beneficiaries should not get their full entitlements regularly.

Table 4: Corruption in distribution of Antyodaya Grain for Apr-June 2003 (in quintals)

Village	No. of Beneficiaries	Allocation of grain	Grain lifted*	Lifting as a % of allocation	Grain distributed as a % of grain lifted**
Pindsawa	83	87.15	87.15	100%	32
Basara	32	33.60	33.60	100%	66
Nindura	62	65.10	65.10	100%	33

⁴² At present it stands at 16,37,000 cards. The number is due to increase with the latest Supreme Court directive (dated May 2, 2003) regarding expansion of AAY to cover an additional 50 lakh families

⁴³ See table 5 for details of corruption in the distribution of grain under the scheme in the three villages visited

⁴⁴ For the list of names given by officials at the block office see annexure 24

*Note:** For Nindura Block it is assumed that grain lifted is close to 100% as per returns given to the team**calculated assuming that beneficiaries in Pindsawa receive grain @34 Kg once in three months, @ 35 Kg once in two months in Basara and @35 Kg once every three months in Nindura as per information provided by Antyodaya beneficiaries from these villages. Also see table 5 for more details

Source: Senior Marketing Inspector, SWC Kursi

Overcharging: Overcharging starts right from the time beneficiaries are selected. The price charged for the application form should not be greater than Rs 2. However all the Antyodaya beneficiaries in Pindsawa were made to pay Rs 5 at the time of application. The amount overcharged for grain distributed varied from village to village but it was a consistently occurring phenomenon. In Basara it was Rs 3, in Pindsawa Rs 10 and in Nindura an exorbitant Rs 20 extra was charged on every installment of grain distributed.

Selection of beneficiaries: "The most crucial element for ensuring the success of the AAY is the correct identification of Antyodaya families."(Ministry guidelines) In order to ensure this a clearly specified process of selection has been outlined. After a preliminary (tentative) list is put up, a gram sabha meeting must be held to finalize the list of beneficiaries. However none of this was done in the villages visited. Most of the villagers were dissatisfied by the selection process and the beneficiaries finally chosen.

Field visits made indicated many cases of exclusion of deserving families. Analysis of the list of beneficiaries for Pindsawa alone showed that corruption in the selection process could not be ruled out. Errors of exclusion and inclusion were found in plenty. The first can arise in cases of families being excluded from the BPL list and by virtue of that from Antyodaya benefits since the former is a pre-requisite. The team came across many instances of such families especially in Basara. The photographs given below are testimony to this fact.

Errors of inclusion can arise when ineligible families are selected to receive Antyodaya benefits. The poorest 15%⁴⁵ of the BPL population in the state are identified for Antyodaya cards. The problem of such limited coverage is compounded by the selection of non-deserving families. Wealthier individuals who have local clout often appropriate benefits under the scheme. A case in point was the inclusion of a family of zamindars in Pindsawa. They allegedly owned much of

⁴⁵ Slated to increase to 23% after the Budget (2002-2003) announcement and the Supreme Court Directive dated May 2 2003

the village land and in addition had managed to get three Antyodaya cards as well. If their two storeyed pacca house was anything to go by they were clearly not destitute.

Violation of Supreme Court Orders: Despite the repeated interventions by the Commissioners, most of the orders of the Supreme Court have been consistently violated. The table given below outlines clearly the severity of the situation as far as non-compliance of these orders is concerned.

Table 6: Status of Implementation of Supreme Court Orders Relating to AAY

Supreme Court Directive⁴⁶	Status of Compliance of orders in villages visited
Ration Shops must remain open throughout the month	Villages reported that ration shops in all the villages visited did not remain open for more than two days and only in the months the grain is scheduled for distribution. The team was also unable to meet any of the PDS dealers in the week when the visit was made.
Grain to be provided strictly at prescribed rates	Reports of overcharging were reported from all the three villages visited.
Cards must not be retained by ration shop dealers	In village Nindura, the ration shop dealer had retained all 62 Antyodaya cards. Individual cases of cards retained in the other villages were also reported.
False entries must not be made in ration cards	Many instances of false entries being made in ration cards were encountered. Typically the amount of grain received and the number of months for which grain was received was overstated.
Households to be permitted to buy in installments	In no village we visited was this permitted. Villagers reported that if they did not have the required cash in the few days when the shop was open their entitlement was forfeited. They were also not permitted to carry over their entitlements if they were unable to arrange the required cash.
Wide publicity to be given to entitlements and court orders to	Most beneficiaries are completely unaware of their entitlements or the mechanisms that can be adopted

⁴⁶ By Supreme Court Order dated 2 May, 2003

increase awareness among beneficiaries	to seek redressal. They were not aware that they were being overcharged or given less than their entitlements. Leaving aside the beneficiaries even other stakeholders like ration shop dealers and secretary of the panchayats were unaware of the Supreme Court Orders.
50 lakh additional cards to be given to identified priority groups (For UP this effectively means 8.191 lakh ⁴⁷ additional households to come under the safety net)	In the villages visited no attempts of identification of additional households had been initiated. Not aware if any instructions have been issued at all by the state government regarding identification and distribution of cards.

IRREGULARITIES IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF BPL GRAIN

One of the elements of the TPDS, this scheme aims to distribute 35 Kg of grain every month to all families identified as being below the poverty line. The problems in the implementation range from overcharging (though the official rate is Rs 4.65 per kilo, beneficiaries are typically charged an amount greater than this), diversion of grain meant for the poor and non-utilization of allotment. Many of the Supreme Court orders similar to those mentioned in the table above for AAY have also been violated in the case of distribution of grain to BPL households. Shops do not remain open for more than two days in the months when grain is distributed, beneficiaries cannot buy in installments and ration cards are retained by dealers. In Nindura village for instance like the Antyodaya cards all the BPL cards had also been retained by the PDS dealer.

Non-utilization of allotment: While the off-take of foodgrains under the Antyodaya and Annapurna schemes has been satisfactory, more efforts need to be made to fully utilize BPL allocations made by the centre. For the year 2002-2003 the off take of rice and wheat under BPL as a proportion of the amount allotted was only 40% and 76% respectively. The performance of the state in the current financial year is also extremely worrying with only 7% having been lifted

⁴⁷ Source: written correspondence from the Department of Rural Development, MoRD

for distribution⁴⁸. Assuming that all the grain lifted reached the beneficiaries this would provide every household below the poverty line with only 8 Kg⁴⁹ for the first four months of the financial year. This is just enough to assist their food needs for about three days. Timely lifting of grain by the state would ensure that such needless delays do not occur.

Table 7: Offtake of BPL as a proportion of Allocation for Uttar Pradesh (in lakh tonnes)

Year	Total Allocation	Total Offtake	% offtake as a proportion of allocation
2000-01	22.79	12.08	53
2001-02	23.39	11.49	49
2002-03	36.88	23.66	64
2003-2004 (Apr-July)	12.65	0.95	7

Source: *Monthly Foodgrain Bulletin, August 2003*

Poor Distribution of Grain: Even when the grain is lifted it does not reach the beneficiaries. In UP the estimated diversion of PDS commodities is much above the national level. For wheat it was 46% as against 36% at the national level and for rice a much higher 49% as against 31% for the country as a whole⁵⁰. In the field it appears therefore that many poor people holding BPL cards are not given rations. In the three villages⁵¹ where BPL cardholders were spoken to not one admitted to getting grain regularly every month.

⁴⁸ This might however reflect the seasonality affect. The first few months of the financial year experience less demand due to higher local supply because of the recent harvest. This might lead to little difference between the issue and market price which can often be lower than the former at these times. However there is a provision for lifting the previous months entitlements in subsequent months which could be made use of by the beneficiaries if they were permitted to do so.

⁴⁹ UP has a BPL population of 40.85% of the total. This comes to about 106.79 lakh BPL households in the state.

⁵⁰ "Study to ascertain the extent of diversion of PDS Commodities", a study submitted to the Planning Commission 2000

⁵¹ This was also reported to be true in the village of Narayanpur where BPL cardholders complained that only Antyodaya cardholders get their rations. However regular BPL card holders are often turned away by the PDS dealer

The reasons given are varied and range from the fact that releases by the FCI are not timely⁵² to the possible collusion between the supply inspectors and ration shop dealers, which appears to be very common⁵³. A lack of evaluation and monitoring of performance of the scheme is also required. This was admitted to by the Principal Secretary (Food) who said that timely independent evaluations identifying the extent to which poor people are not able to get good quality foodgrains at BPL prices has not been done in the recent past. There is a need to address this issue at the earliest.

NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF COOKED MID DAY MEAL SCHEME

This scheme aimed at fulfilling two goals simultaneously. One was the alleviation of nutrition deficiency among children in primary classes. The second was ensuring that primary education in the country becomes universal. The GoI gives the states (free) grain @3 kgs per child per month for 10 months of the year. In its original form the scheme started by providing children with grain however an order from the Supreme Court⁵⁴ directed all states to implement cooked meals in all government, local body and government aided primary schools. This was subsequently extended to children studying in EGS and other alternative learning centers as well.

However UP is one of the few states that is yet to initiate the cooked mid day meal scheme. Moreover it appears that there is a complete lack of will on the part of the state administration to comply with the Courts orders, since no efforts have been made towards this end. This is despite a lenient order given by the Court⁵⁵ directing the state to start the process in atleast 25% of the districts. Subsequently decision was taken to initiate the programme in 6 districts of the State, including Barabanki the district visited. However implementation is yet to start even in these identified districts. Despite numerous letters⁵⁶ to the state government and significant media attention⁵⁷, efforts to initiate cooked meals have not been taken⁵⁸.

⁵² Source: Private conversation between the SRM FCI and Dr Saxena

⁵³ Source: Private conversation between the DM Barabanki and Dr Saxena

⁵⁴ Order dated November 28, 2001

⁵⁵ Order dated May 2, 2003

⁵⁶ See table 10

⁵⁷ For a host of newspaper articles and editorials on this and related subjects see annexures 15-21

⁵⁸ Some efforts had been taken a few years back but that was in areas where local NGO's had been given the responsibility to implement cooked meals. This too has since been terminated as state cooperation was minimal.

Corruption in the distribution of grain: Regarding distribution of dry rations, figures for offtake of grain for the state as a whole are above average. The offtake of grain for the MDM scheme as a percentage of allotment was close to 92%⁵⁹ for the last financial year.

At the village level however students do not receive their full entitlement of 3kgs per child for ten months of the year. In the village of Nindura grain under this scheme is typically distributed to enrolled students once every two or three months. The 'Shiksha Mitra' at Pindsawa recounted a similar story. According to him grain had not been distributed for the months of March and April 2003. However records at the block office show that the requisite grain has been lifted for these months⁶⁰.

Delay in distribution of dry rations: A persistent problem seems to be the irregularity with which grain is distributed. It appears that a large part of the reason for the delay is the administrative process of requiring sanctions from the SDM/DSO every two or three months⁶¹. Delay in receiving sanctions had meant that allotment for Barabanki district for the current year still remained to be made till July 2003. This had resulted in no distribution of grain for the new academic year starting April 2003. This situation does not arise in the case of AAY and BPL since sanctions are given for the entire year at one time. This wastes little time in obtaining allotments and permits speedy lifting of grains from the Civil Supplies Offices by the PDS dealer. Since the enrollment rates are not likely to change within a period of a year there appears to be no reason why sanctions are required at regular intervals.

INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

It has long been recognized that pregnant women and infants are one of the most vulnerable segments of society with low nutrition being a major area of concern among this group. The ICDS aimed to address all of children's needs under one umbrella. The scheme covers areas from nutrition of pregnant women to nutrition, healthcare and educational needs of the child till he completes the age of 6. The services of the scheme include supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, referral services, and non-formal preschool education. The ICDS centre or Anganwadi is the implementing centre for performing the above services. Considerable

⁵⁹ UP has reported child enrollment of 14,855,697 for the year 2002-2003. Against an allocation of total grain of 445,671 the amount of grain lifted is 410,708. Department of Elementary Education, MoHRD

⁶⁰ The number of students enrolled is 240 for which the required amount of 21.6 quintals of grain has been lifted till April 2003 as per the information given by the SMI, Kursi

⁶¹ Source: Conversations with SMI, Kursi

attention in improving the quality of services delivered needs to be given, if this scheme is to deliver all it envisages.

Inadequate Coverage: The Supreme Court has directed all states to ensure that there is one anganwadi for every habitation. However estimates for the state of UP indicate that there are close to only 750 AWC projects in operation currently. This essentially translates into 75,000 AWCs⁶², which is much lower than 1,12,803, the estimated number of villages⁶³ in UP, let alone the number of habitations⁶⁴. With a larger population to serve, Anganwadi's may be at large distances from the center of the village. This limits the ability of young children to attend daily since they need to be escorted back and forth. It is therefore absolutely imperative to ensure that there is atleast one centre in every habitation. This would go a long way in ensuring that benefits are availed of by all eligible⁶⁵.

Further in clear violation of directives of the court, adolescent girls are not being covered. With respect to meeting the needs of the target population the current allocations made are also insufficient. The current allotment made for each operational AWC in Nindura block is 225 Kgs of Panjiree per month, which is enough to serve only 40 children and 16 pregnant/feeding mothers⁶⁶. The villages visited had populations greater than 1500. Clearly the benefits are not universal.

Insufficient Quantity: The feed given at the centers visited comprised of a ready to eat mixture of whole wheat flour and gur/sugar locally known as Panjiree. This can be eaten by itself or cooked lightly with oil and milk to form a gruel. Accounts of the amount of the mixture distributed indicated that it was clearly insufficient to meet the nutrition requirements⁶⁷ of the women and the children visiting the center. Respondents admitted to receiving only a 'Mhuttibhar' (handful) of Panjiree whenever they visited the centre.

⁶² On an average every anganwadi project has 100 AWC under its administration

⁶³ Source: 1991 census

⁶⁴ Typically one village consists of a number of habitations

⁶⁵ In a bid to universalize the services under ICDS, it was proposed that there should be one AWC per 1000 rural population and in tribal areas one for every 700 persons. Even by this norm the number of functional AWC's is grossly inadequate.

⁶⁶ This information was provided by the AWW in Pindsawa

⁶⁷ Children upto 6 years to be provided 300 calories and 8 to 10 gms of protein. Adolescent girls to be provided 500 calories and 20-25 Gms of protein per day. Pregnant and nursing mothers 500 calories 20-25 gms of protein per day. Malnourished children are entitled to double the daily supplement provided to the other children (600 calories and/or special nutrients on medical recommendation).

The amount distributed varies between the villages visited. In Pindsawa, children aged 3-6 receive 150gm of Panjiree while in Basara they get 75 gms, whenever they visit the center. The amount given to infants is 100 gms and 200 gms in the two villages respectively. In Nindura pregnant women are given 500 gms of the mixture which reduces to 250 gms after the child is delivered. This is significantly more than the 80 gms that expecting mothers get in Pindsawa. The problem of inadequate quantity is accentuated when the available amounts are rationed. It appears that the amount distributed depends on the eligible population the AWC serves. More efforts to take into account local discrepancies in the demand for such services need to be taken.

Irregular Supply: Delays in the supply of Panjiree to the Anganwadis appears to be a common phenomenon. A visit to the block headquarters at Nindura showed a total of 1125 bags in storage enough for nearly a months requirement of feed for the entire block. Further investigation revealed that supply for the month of May had not been dispatched till July 2003. Effectively this meant that supply for the entire block for a period of three months was still due.

Lack of infrastructure: Though the programme appeared to be in operation, the biggest casualty is the quality of services delivered, both infrastructural and institutional in nature. In Basara the anganwadi had a courtyard and two rooms fully enclosed by a boundary wall. It was also the only AWC in operation at the time of the visit. The centre in Nindura with a pacca roof and walls and ample courtyard space had been recently renovated and was evidence enough to show that much can be done if will permits. However in sharp contrast the anganwadi in Pindsawa comprised of a small hut with a thatched roof with space that would barely fit ten children comfortably. It was clearly not equipped to handle all the services that must be delivered under the programme.

Another issue that needs attention is the understaffing of centers with only one AWW and one AWH deputed per ICDS centre. Accounts of irregular attendance at the center appeared to be a common phenomena, unless the two employed were from the same village.

Box 3: Marginalised Groups - Limited Coverage of the Social Safety Net*

Migrant Workers- The Case of Brick Kiln Workers in UP

The brick kilns situated in large parts of the state are an important source of employment in the unorganized sector. These are also considered to be a favourable destination for the poor and unemployed tribal communities of neighbouring states of Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar. Conditions of work in these kilns are deplorable with minimal pay. Increasing exploitation of these migrant families is common with the workers especially migrants working on an average of 12-16 hours a day without getting minimum wages. Employment at these kilns extends for a period of 8-9 months, normally from October to June. Remuneration depends on the number of family members who work but the average ranges from Rs. 800/- to 1200/- per month for a family of five. This gives them barely enough money for food and little for other services like shelter, health, education, social security etc. The most inhuman part of the process is the involvement of the small kids in the manufacturing of bricks, who are compelled to work in these hazardous situations for the survival of the family. Being migrants they have little access to social security and are often denied benefits due to lack of a permanent residence. A state decision to provide such families with Mobile temporary Ration cards would provide them with some food security.

Displaced Communities of Bahraich

Bahraich is one of the most backward districts of UP. A shift in the course of the Ghaghra River has resulted in the displacement of close to 900 families in 2000 and 300 families in 2001. The main occupation of these families was agriculture but the river has submerged their land destroying the only source of livelihood they knew. A consequence is the increased dependence on casual labour for which there is also little scope. Food insecurity as a result is high and many families have had to take loans at exorbitant rates of interest to meet their daily needs.

Visthapit Sangharsh Morcha (a peoples organisation for displaced communities) with the support of FIAN-U.P. has been arranging meetings with victims to create awareness about their requirements. Results of a survey conducted revealed the need for 456 BPL cards for this group. Through continuous intervention in this matter, the office of the DSO changed the status of more than 50% of the cards held by such families from APL to BPL. Further requests that the BPL cards should be changed to Antyodaya cards, due to the economic situation of these families

were also made. In March 2003 however in a complete change of events, even the earlier altered ration cards were cancelled without giving any alternate form of relief.

Discrimination against Forest areas: 6752 Families of Forest Villages Without Ration Cards

The existence of people living in forest villages has often been denied. There are around 150 villages in U.P with no legal or constitutional definition but where residents have settled with the consent of the forest department. A study conducted in the 35 forest villages of the districts of Bahraich, Maharajganj, Gorakhpur and Pilibheet indicates that by virtue of not being considered citizens of the village panchayat, ration cards are not provided to residents of these areas. This limits greatly their access to many government welfare schemes. Of the total 6752 families residing in these villages, 63.8% belong to the Scheduled Castes. Despite the clear need for social support, no government schemes such as the ones spoken about in this report are operating in these villages.

Exclusion of Tribals from Welfare Schemes: case of food rights of the Kol Community

In Naibasti hamlet of panchayat Devghat in the district of Allahabad, 50 households with a total population of about 290 live with minimal government support. The village is dominated by tribals with the Kol community as the predominant caste. Daily wage earning is the only way of livelihood for most of these families with supplementary income from collecting and selling firewood. The average annual cash income for many of the families is reported to be as low as Rs. 1500/ annum. Despite the apparent extent of poverty in the area no individual has received benefits from a number of government schemes in operation elsewhere. This includes the mid-day meal scheme, widow and pensions for the handicapped, AAY, Annapurna, SGRY and NMBS. This provides adequate evidence of the compelling need to address the concerns of tribals as a group.

* Adapted from various submissions received from the Right to Food Campaign in UP

DELAY IN DISTRIBUTION OF ANNAPURNA BENEFITS

The scheme was introduced to provide food security to elderly citizens who have little support and who do not receive benefits under pensions. Beneficiaries are entitled to 10Kg of food grain per month free of cost. This is one scheme that seems to be working relatively well in the villages visited. A majority of the beneficiaries met admitted to receiving close to their full entitlement of 120Kg in a year albeit with regular delays in the distribution of grain. It seems that the

installment of grain is often received together for many months at a time. For Nindura block the last installment of grain had been distributed in February 2003. The grain for the months of March 2003- June 2003 was distributed together sometime in mid July. Clearly for many of the aged destitute the grain they receive from this is the only source of food. Such delays can therefore cause irreparable harm. The issue of requirement of sanctions every few months mentioned in the case of the MDM scheme appears to be the main reason for the delay. Sanctions and consequently allotments made once every year would prevent untimely distribution of Annapurna grain.

OLD AGE AND WIDOW PENSIONS

For the year 2003-04, old age, disability and widow pensions for the first six months had already been released to all districts in the state. Like Annapurna it appears that this is one social security scheme that is being implemented with relatively less corruption. Most beneficiaries met were receiving their entitlements in full. An amount of 750/- for a period of six months is directly credited into the bank accounts of beneficiaries.

There are however some issues of concern. **Firstly the coverage of the scheme is extremely limited.** Estimates of the number that would qualify for old age pensions puts the number potentially eligible close to 12 lakh⁶⁸. Contrast this with the 6 lakh beneficiaries that were given pensions last year. (Also see table given below). More efforts are required to ensure that all eligible families are identified and covered under the scheme.

The second issue deals with the levying of bank/ collection charges on cheques deposited. These benefits are provided to those who have little or no support from other sources and should be absolved from paying such charges. **A related issue is the requirement of minimum balance in cash at the time a new account is opened**⁶⁹. Though these amounts are small it often proves to be difficult to arrange the required cash. One Kailasha widow of Mathura Lal and resident of Pindsawa said that in all probability the cheque of 750 made out to her would remain uncashed

⁶⁸ This financial target is based on the percentage of population residing below the poverty line

⁶⁹ A similar incident had taken place with relief payments made to families affected by the hailstorms in winter this year. Cheques had been issued by the Tehsildar Fatehpur Barabanki in March this year, to more than 200 families. The amount issued ranged from Rs 75 to Rs 320 depending on the size of land holding. However levying of bank charges meant that many of the cheques remained uncashed because beneficiaries did not think it was worth the effort since most of the net receipts would be negligible. This also happened in Nindura with cheques issued as drought relief payments. Apart from the amount being insignificant most of the cheques were worthless since bank accounts could not be opened with such nominal amounts.

since the bank was asking for Rs 300 in cash to open the account. As a single mother of two adolescent girls and one son she was unable to arrange such a large amount. This was in addition to the Rs 300, which she had to pay the pradhan for receiving this entitlement. Instructions should be issued to banks to open accounts without minimum balance requirements.

It also appears that widows are struck off the list of beneficiaries when their sons become adults. This is on the presumption that adequate care will be provided since the sons are now capable of earning a living and providing one for their parent as well. In many cases widows live separately from their offspring who in dire situations are very often not able to look after their own families. Automatic termination of benefits based on this criterion, without leaving scope for individual cases could prove to be fatal.

Last is the issue of timely reporting of the death of a pensioner to the required authorities. A case in point is that of Ramrati wife of Mewalal who been dead for the last two months, without it being brought to the notice of the authorities. The team came across cases where block authorities were not aware of changes in the number of pensioners. As per the information provided by the block officials, Pindsawa has four widow pensioners. However another ten had been added to the list more than two months back. Timely notification would ensure that excluded individuals get access to such support faster. It would also reduce the possibility of misappropriation of benefits. This brings into focus the crucial role that adequate monitoring and appraisal can play in ensuring that all eligible are covered.

Table 8: Non Utilization of funds under National Social Assistance Programme⁷⁰ in UP

Scheme	Numerical Ceiling*	Qualifying Financial Entitlement* (Rs. Lakh)	Funds released/ expenditure reported, (Rs. Lakh)		% expenditure as a proportion of QFE (column 3)
			2001-02	2002-03	
1	2	3	4	5	6
NOAPS	12,55,200	11,296.80	7,674.49	5,794.53	51%

⁷⁰ The NMBS was transferred from the MoRD to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2001-02. As of this date the NSAP includes only the NFBS and NOAPS

NFBS	1,13,300	11,330.00	2,250.17	1,622.19	14%
NMBS	11,33,300	5,666.50	1,075.35	592.82	10%
ANNAPURNA[^]	251,040	3,307.28	1,391.47	NA	42% (2001-02)

*Note: *is based on population projections as on 1.7.98 and poverty ratios, age specific birth and death rates based on Modified expert group report for 1993-94 (except for Annapurna). The QFE is the numerical ceiling multiplied by the financial ceiling for the relevant benefit (except for Annapurna). [^] The numerical ceilings for this scheme have been based on the ones under NOAPS. The number to be benefited are 20 of the persons eligible to receive pensions under NOAPS. Financial entitlement for Annapurna includes sales tax and transportation cost*

Source: Relevant Ministries GoI

NATIONAL MATERNITY BENEFIT SCHEME

This scheme provides lump sum cash assistance of Rs. 500/- to pregnant women of BPL households. The benefit is available for women aged 19 or above for the first two live births. It aims to assist families for expenditures that arise in meeting the nutrition needs of pregnant women. The forms are processed at the PHC block headquarters after medical approval from the ANM worker and the secretary of the panchayat verifying the BPL status of the applicant is received. However the implementation of the scheme is riddled with problems.

Low utilization of funds: The funds released by the center for the state as a whole has shown a sharp decline of about 50%⁷¹ between the year 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. The amount released decreased from Rs. 1075.35 lakh to Rs. 592.82 lakh between the two years, despite Court orders that all eligible candidates must be covered under the scheme⁷². In a state with a population of more than 162 million and one of the highest fertility rates, this effectively meant that just 118,564 women were covered under the scheme. This is mainly on account of non-utilization of funds since releases from the center are demand driven. Release of funds is linked to the utilization of funds established through the utilization certificates/ audited accounts provided by districts and depends on the extent of funds used in the last year.

⁷¹ Also see table 8. The funds being utilized as a proportion of the qualifying financial ceiling is only 10%.

⁷² Dr Saxena had even brought this to the notice of the administration in an earlier visit to Chandauli. For a copy of the letter see annexure 14

A reason cited for the poor utilization of funds is the 'lack of proper implementation, especially at the state and district level'⁷³. Another potential constraint could be the available physical infrastructure with an acute shortage of the staff employed. There is only one ANM worker (required to authorize the form) for every 4-5 villages. The worker is often not a resident of the village in which the PHC sub center is located which leads to irregular attendance at the center.

The state-wide picture is supported by the state of events in the field. Information from the PHC at Ghungter, which serves as the block headquarter, revealed that less than 57% of the funds allotted were utilized. Against a target of 1200 births for the year 2002-2003, funds for only 688 births had been distributed till June 2003. This one PHC alone serves 72 Gram Panchayats and is the sole disbursing authority for funds distributed under this scheme. It seems highly improbable that in such a large group of people more funds could not have been disbursed. Infact villagers in Pindsawa gave a list of women who had applied/ were eligible⁷⁴ but had not been given benefits under the scheme. The team was unable to verify why that had happened.

Delay in benefits: The benefits are supposed to be disbursed before the delivery of the child. However administrative delay's in many cases has prevented timely distribution of funds. This is despite Court orders that all payments must be strictly disbursed 8-12 weeks prior to the delivery. Delay in disbursement defeats the purpose of providing for the nutrition needs of the mother and child when they need it most.

Corruption: Some beneficiaries reported having to pay the 'Doctor' at the PHC in order to receive the money under the scheme. Cases of ANM workers sanctioning approvals about the medical condition of the woman only on the payment of 'token' money were also reported.

The selection of beneficiaries is also ridden with instances of corruption. In Pindsawa cases of women receiving benefits on the delivery of their fifth and seventh children was found, in clear disregard of the 'first two' children norm that has been established. In both cases they happened to be wives of gram panchayat members. One beneficiary⁷⁵ was not even a resident of the village from where she had received the benefit.

⁷³Source: Brief note on the functioning of NMBS, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

⁷⁴See annexure 12 for names

⁷⁵ Nasimun wife of Altav

It is quite possible that the system of issuing a 'self' cheque abets corruption. The official at the PHC does not forward the forms but just the number of eligible applications that he has received. Further installments are asked for as and when more applications are received at the PHC. The district authorities in turn issue a lump sum cheque to the bank account opened for this purpose alone. A self cheque is then given to the eligible applicants who can withdraw the money. A copy of the bank statement containing all the names of beneficiaries in the last year and till July this year was obtained from the PHC⁷⁶. This was followed by a field visit to all the women mentioned. In 3 cases the women mentioned on the list could not be traced and in one case the applicant said she did not receive the money⁷⁷. Whether the money has been appropriated by the Secretary (responsible for submitting forms to the block) or at the PHC needs to be investigated further.

Lack of information: An important reason attributed to the non-utilization of funds is the lack of information about the scheme and its eligibility requirements. Many of the villagers had no knowledge that such a scheme existed and for many others the process appeared to be extremely time consuming and futile⁷⁸. This was seen to hold especially in hamlets which were distant from where the pradhan resided. The lack of knowledge starts from where the application form is available. According to the medical superintendent at the PHC, the forms can be picked up at shops/ market places or with the secretary. What can be concluded is the fact that forms are not available in either the PHC or in the PHC sub-centres, where one would expect them to be. Villagers are also unaware of what the eligibility criteria is or what the process of application entails. Clearly measures to disseminate information among beneficiaries of their entitlements need to be undertaken.

⁷⁶ A list of the names of these beneficiaries is given in Annexure 13

⁷⁷ See table 9

⁷⁸ Many individuals reported that they had submitted applications but had not received the money. Further enquiry did throw up cases of non eligible applicants but for some the reason for non receipt of funds could not be ascertained.

Table 9: Amounts disbursed to residents of Pindsawa under NMBS for the year 2002-2003

Wives name	Husbands name	Village	Benefits given on the birth of child number	Amt received net after payments to doctors and ANM workers	Remarks
Shishu	Malaluddin	Pindsawa	5 th birth	500/-	Panch member's wife
Shikha	Salimuddin	Pindsawa	7 th birth	500/-	Panch member's wife
Shilpa	Vimlesh	Pindsawa	2 nd birth	400/-	100/- taken by doctors (18.12.02)
Shimun	Altav	Pindsawa	2 nd birth	500/-	According to the villagers, she is not a resident of this village but lives here. The family refused to provide information to the investigator. Further her name is not mentioned in the list given to the Panch.
Shriya	Shakeel	Pindsawa	5 th birth	350/-	Had to pay Rs 100/- at the time of birth and Rs 50/- to the aganwadi worker.
Shruti devi	Mukundi	Paltapur	Not available	No benefits given	Name in list given at the PHC. Filled a form on 1 st child but did not receive the benefits (according to her she gave a filled form to the Panch).
Shrujan	Shambhu	Pindsawa	Not available	No benefits given	Name in list given at the PHC.
Shrujan	Edrish	Pindsawa	Not available	No benefits given	Name in list given at the PHC.
Shruti	Ashok Kumar	Pindsawa	Not available	No benefits given	Name in list given at the PHC.

NATIONAL FAMILY BENEFIT SCHEME

This scheme aims at providing a one time assistance of Rs.10,000 to a BPL household on the death of the primary breadwinner. Payments must be made within four weeks of the death through the local sarpanch. This scheme also suffers from many of the problems found in the case of NMBS. Non-utilization of funds⁷⁹, lack of information about the scheme and its entitlements are some of the issues that have been raised in the past and that need urgent attention. The issue of corruption with mis-appropriation of funds also needs greater investigation. The secretary of Pindsawa told the team that the only two applications which had been forwarded to the block office, were rejected. However information from the block office revealed that money for two beneficiaries⁸⁰ had been disbursed.

Many of these issues had been brought to the notice of the state administration on a visit of the Commissioner to Chandauli earlier in the year. It remains to be seen what efforts are taken by the state to improve the situation.

Box 4: The Urban Destitute of Sarvodyanagar Azadnagar

The slum population in India constituted about 17.5% of the urban population in 1981 and has since risen significantly to 21.3% in 1991. Most of the schemes target the needy population in rural areas. Little emphasis is given to the destitute residing in urban areas. The urban slum of Sarvodyanagar Azadnagar consists of about 300 households. Most of the residents are migrants from the districts of Behraich, Sandila and Sitapur who have chosen to leave their native villages in search of work. A large part of the rural urban migration reflects the stagnation of incomes and employment in the rural areas. Lack of diversification and available opportunities in the rural setup especially in backward states like UP is the main reason why village residents need to leave their native village in search of adequate livelihood. Addressing their needs in the villages itself could reduce the pressure on urban resources.

⁷⁹ The funds released by the Center for NFBS between the year 2001-02 and 2002-03 has shown a sharp decline of about 30%. The amount released decreased from Rs. 2250.17 lakh to Rs. 1622.19 lakh between the two years. This is enough to serve just 16,222 beneficiaries when the number of BPL households in the state is close to 107 lakh families. Only 14% of the qualifying financial ceiling is being utilized. Clearly a large number of needs are not being met for one reason or another. Also see table 8

⁸⁰ These were Bindeshwari widow of Ved Prakash, Gayatri widow of Shyam Manohar

Situated in the heart of the city of Lucknow, Azadnagar is deprived of basic facilities like access to clean drinking water, proper sanitation and basic health facilities. Residents access to most of the social security schemes operating in the villages is also limited. The only source of water is a handpump situated about 500 metres from the slum. All 300 families need to wait for the local residents to draw water before they are allowed to do so. The families defecate in the open and share their space with buffaloes that wallow in the nearby sewers used to collect the city waste. Close to 200 families depend on daily wages earned from pulling hired rickshaws, 35 families earn their daily bread by selling milk and the rest depend on casual labour for their daily livelihood.

Jagdish Prasad is a rickshaw puller by profession and lives with his wife Sangeeta, his 65 year old mother and five children. Their parents migrated from Kesarganj Tehsil in Behraich many years ago. Though he owns some land in the village it does not provide him enough to even ensure two meals a day for his entire family. They have an APL ration card in the village but receive no benefit from it. Jagdish earns Rs1200 a month as salary for picking and dropping children from the nearby school. This is supplemented with about Rs 750 from his wife's earnings as a domestic maid. Half of the family's grain requirement is sourced from the amount cropped from their 2.5 bigha of land in the village. The other half is met from the local market. One of the reasons he needs to remain in the city is to earn enough to repay a loan taken from both the Grameen bank in his village and from the local city 'mahajan'. The interest charged by the latter is at a steep rate of 10% per month. The terms of repayment implies that Rs 400 is deducted from his salary every month. This is in addition to the Rs 200 he owes to the 'sahukar', the village moneylender. They have no assets and no access to any social security scheme. The house they live in has a thatched roof and floods during the rains. A year back an 'official' had taken a flat sum of Rs 125 from every household in the slum on the promise that a flat in a nearby colony would be. Forms were filled and photographs asked for but nothing materialized and no one returned. Despite a monthly income for the entire family that is below the poverty line⁸¹ this family has no BPL card, no Antyodaya card and no assistance for the aged mother.

On an average a rickshaw puller earns about Rs 50 a day with it ranging between Rs75 and Rs100 on a very good day. For those who are not lucky enough to own a rickshaw (and there are very few who do) twenty rupees of their daily earnings have to be paid as rent to the owner. This lumpsum amount is paid irrespective of the amount earned in the day. Most of the women are

⁸¹ The state specific poverty line for UP in 1999-2000 was Rs.336.88 per capita per month for rural areas and Rs 416.29 for urban areas

employed in nearby houses as domestic servants. They earn anywhere between Rs 750 and Rs 1000 a month depending on the number of houses they manage to work in. There are limited services available for families with such limited income. The children of this area are sent to a 'school' (private tutor) where a princely sum of Rs50 per child per month is charged. There is only one teacher and one classroom available and children of all ages are taught together. The parents say they can't afford to send their children to a 'proper' school because fees, uniforms and books are luxuries they cannot afford. Some of these families are entitled to rations available for those designated to be APL. This only makes available to them small quantities of sugar and kerosene but at near market price. However this too has stopped since the PDS shop which catered to them shut down. The residents don't believe the process and trouble in applying for another is worth the meager benefits received.

The night before the visit to the slum a lady had died. Masra w/o Ramanand had delivered a daughter 11 days back. She had suffered from acute weakness and pain in the stomach and had even vomited thrice before she died. Her husband is mentally slow and unable to earn a decent livelihood. The new born baby will be looked after by her maternal grandmother who also lives in the same slum. She now lives with her son and his family due to a family feud that makes living in the village an infeasible option. The land their own provides at best 2-4 quintals of grain for the whole year provided the water available is sufficient. Her son is a rickshaw puller and supports a family of eight on his earnings. They have no access to any social security scheme. Abdul Karim another resident does. He has an Antyodaya ration card in the village but he prefers not to buy grain from there. "Looking at the quality makes your hunger go away so who needs that grain" he retorted.

The women of this area were very keen to meet the Chief Minister so that they can vent their woes. Their current lifestyle has not completely eroded their faith in the government and the power it has to change their lives.

SECTION IV: ADMINISTRATIONS RESPONSE

The Commissioners were appointed in November 2001. Since then many letters have been written to the state administration about the status of implementation of the above mentioned social security schemes and other related developments. However the administration has chosen to turn a blind eye to requests for information, measures and suggestions to improve implementation of the schemes and transparency in general.

The response to interventions by the Commissioners in other states particularly those of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa have been extremely encouraging. The same unfortunately cannot be said of Uttar Pradesh, a state that infact could do with sweeping reforms in this sphere. Most of the social indicators place the state at abysmal levels of deprivation, outlining several issues that require urgent attention. However the issues don't seem to be on the priority list of the state administration that has chosen to ignore all efforts made by the Commissioners in addressing the inadequacies in the implementation of these schemes. This is very evident from the table given below

Table 10: State Governments response to Letters Sent and Issues Raised by the Commissioners

	Subject of letter sent to the Chief Secretary, GoUP	Dated	Response of the administration
1	Non-implementation of Supreme Courts Orders on providing cooked mid day meals in schools. (Letter sent by Advisor to the Commissioner in UP)	5 Aug 02	No Response
2	Measures to ensure food security in situation of drought and the preparations being made to ensure adequate generation and provision of relief employment	16 Aug 02	The drought has not lead to deaths of any kind. However memorandum of relief measures to be undertaken has been sent to all departments and also submitted to the GoI

			(Reply received on 21 Sept 02)
3	Non- Implementation of cooked mid day meals	17 Oct 02	Implementation would require massive increase in funds as current allocation would prove to be insufficient Possibility of panchayats being entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the same was also suggested (Reply received on 1 Jan 03)
4	Status of Implementation of cooked mid day meals	27 Nov 02	No response
5	Poor performance of SGRY during April-September 2002	10 Dec 02	No response
6	Starvation Deaths reported in Chandauli District	N.A	Investigation into alleged deaths conducted. The administration believes that these deaths were caused due to illness rather than starvation (Reply received on 21 Jan 03)
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting transparency in SGRY • Muster rolls to be made easily available to those who wish to see them • Provide details of schemes on websites 	17 Feb 03	No response
8	Drought Relief Plans for coming months and	17 Mar 03	Reply received on 2 May

	Measures undertaken to ensure relief for all affected families		2003, outlining measures that would be undertaken <i>should</i> the need arise
9	Use of machines in Public works	30 April 03	No response
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non utilization of SGRY funds • Use of machines in wage employment schemes • Measures to be taken for promoting transparency in employment schemes 	8 May 03	No response
11	<p>Social security measures for destitute people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that pensions are sent regularly by the 7th of each month • Measures taken to ensure that list of beneficiaries is computerized and easily available to all 	10 May 03	No response
12	<p>Measures to be taken for implementing orders on doubling SGRY during May-July 2003</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send letter to GoI asking for additional funds • Ensure that additional works are started in districts that have utilized existing quotas • Enquire about poor performing districts • Send monthly progress reports of SGRY to the Commissioners for regular updates 	5 June 03	No response
13	<p>Status of Annapurna in Uttar Pradesh including details of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scope and coverage • information about number of 	4 July 03	No response

	<p>beneficiaries,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grain allocation and offtake 		
14	<p>Measures to be undertaken on issues raised by visit to Chandauli</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social audit to be conducted in designated areas • Measures to improve transparency • Ensure utilization of funds under all schemes 	7 July 03	No response
15	<p>Status of mid day meals scheme and request for details of implementation of cooked mid day meal scheme including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of schools covered, • financial allocations made, • infrastructure provisions provided for 	7 July 03	No response
16	<p>Food assistance programmes for the urban homeless and details of state governments policy regarding the same</p>	9 July 03	No response
17	<p>Investigation of complaints of several starvation deaths reported among Musahars and children in the districts of Varanasi and Sonbhadhra</p>	2 Sept 03	No response
18	<p>Status of implementation of courts orders on expansion of AAY to cover identified priority groups beneficiaries including arrangements made</p>	2 Sept 03	No response
19	<p>Non compliance of Supreme Court orders relating to transparency in the PDS</p>	16 Sept 03	Response awaited
20	<p>Implementation of the Courts Orders on expansion of Antyodya Ann Yojana</p>	6 October	Response awaited

SECTION V: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

This report is based on a field visit made to three villages Pindsawa, Basara and Nindura of Barabanki district. Considerable attention was given to evaluating the works undertaken under SGRY the panchayat of Pindsawa. Apart from the wage employment scheme, the implementation of several food related schemes like the Antyodaya Ann Yojana, the ICDS, the mid day meal scheme and Annapurna were also studied. A summary of the findings reported extensively in the text is given below.

Inadequate Relief: In Pindsawa the actual employment created by the Sampoon Grameen Rozgar Yojana is negligible. This is mainly on account of low utilization of funds, delay in allocations to the districts, the use of labour-displacing machines, delay in the release of states share of funds and siphoning of funds meant for employment works.

Poor selection and unplanned implementation of projects: The team found many instances where the selection of projects was not based on a formal system of project appraisal or evaluation. A large number of works are started by word of mouth, with formalities being completed after the project is over. They seem to be based neither on demands made by gram sabhas nor on technical and economic evaluations. This has resulted in the creation of many unproductive assets. Most of the 'assets' constructed are not fit to be used barely a year after they were constructed.

Full entitlements not received: None of the beneficiaries spoken to in the villages visited had received their full entitlement of grain under the BPL or the AAY. In none of the villages visited were Antyodaya beneficiaries receiving their complete entitlements of 35 Kgs every month even though data shows that all the required grain is being lifted from the state godowns. This was also reported to be the case as far as BPL cards are concerned.

No labourer admitted to receiving any grain for work done on SGRY projects. A result is that they are often paid only in cash but at a rate considerable less the minimum wage. Out of the three anganwadis visited only one was in operation at the time of the visit. The supplementary feed distributed at these centers was also adhoc and of a quantity clearly insufficient to meet the nutrition requirements of the beneficiaries.

Retaining cards of beneficiaries: Cards of beneficiaries are often retained by the PDS dealer and grains diverted or appropriated by him. This is especially so in cases where the rightful owners of the cards cannot afford to buy grain from the PDS shop. In the case of Nindura all the Antyodaya and BPL cards had been retained by the ration shop dealer. This is in clear violation of Supreme Court Orders.

Lack of information: Most of the people met had little knowledge about their entitlements. This was especially apparent in the case of the NFBS and NMBS. This is when the Supreme Court has issued clear orders that wide publicity is to be given to the names of beneficiaries, their entitlements under various schemes and the orders given by the Supreme Court. Even the officials at the block office and the secretary of the panchayats visited were not aware of the latest Orders, let alone the villagers.

Delay in the Distribution of Benefits: This appeared to be a common complaint particularly for distribution of grain under ICDS, midday meal scheme and the Annapurna Yojana. The delay sometimes extended to periods over three months. A large part of the reason stems from the delay in obtaining sanctions and allocations from the district authorities without which grain cannot be lifted by the ration shop dealers.

Corruption: There is enough evidence of widespread corruption in nearly all the schemes that were in operation. All the muster rolls of SGRY works obtained and the related grain coupons seen had been fudged. There was adequate evidence of ghost projects as well. In one case all the drains were shown to have been constructed using allocated funds when infact these were completed using voluntary labour. However muster rolls for these projects were given to the Commissioners team. Instances where fake entries in Antyodya ration cards had been made were also found. This was done either by overstating the amount of grain purchased every time or by entering for subsequent months against which no grain had actually been received.

Violation of Supreme Court Orders: The administration seems to have turned a deaf ear to most of the orders passed by the apex court. Apart from the ones already described in this section orders to implement cooked midday meals and expand coverage of ICDS to every habitation and to cover all adolescent girls has not been complied with. Except for the pension scheme and

the Annapurna most of the central norms pertaining to implementation of these schemes are not being adhered to.

SECTION VI: CONCLUDING REMARKS

The crucial role of governance in ensuring that poverty alleviation schemes are implemented effectively is well documented. **Effective administration in turn is the result of a number of interrelated factors like adequate monitoring, high levels of transparency, dissemination of information and timely evaluations. None of which exist in the case of Uttar Pradesh, if the experience of the villages visited in this case study are anything to go by.**

Lack of information about ones entitlements and the schemes that are available plays a very important role. Leakage has been reduced where the poor and civil society at large have been able to access information about their entitlements. Greater use should be made of the mass media, electronic and others to improve dissemination of information.

A system of monitoring and evaluation of schemes is absent in the villages visited. Though many of these schemes have inbuilt safeguards a lack of compliance with many of the rules and procedural requirements has led to widespread misuse of funds. Greater interaction with civil society groups could keep the upper echelons of the administration in touch with realities on the field. Employment of private agencies/ credible organizations to undertake independent evaluations at regular intervals would also go a long way in ensuring accountability. Experiences in other states have indicated that an increased participation of credible NGOs & organizations working at the grassroots in monitoring the implementation of government schemes has increased vigilance thereby enhancing scheme performance.

Greater transparency in government operations is also essential to ensure that the benefits trickle down to the lowest level. Even the Commissioners team had to face initial resistance to obtain well guarded documents like muster rolls. Ready and non-costly access to documents would go a long way in ensuring that those in power can be held accountable for not delivering as is required. The use of innovative methods like paintings on the walls of Panchayat Bhaawans and other public buildings to ensure that all transactions are in the public domain would increase transparency. Movement towards a Freedom of Information Act present in a number of other states must also be made.

As far as possible use of central agencies like post offices and banks to distribute benefits should also be made. Direct transfers of this kind, which ensure a high level of automaticity and

reduced discretion of local officers should be used. This is seen to have worked in UP, illustrated by the regularity with which pensioners receive their entitlements. The fact that pensions are being delivered in a timely manner illustrates how absence of administrative procedures and delays can ensure the smooth working of a social security scheme.

Most of the schemes are lacking in effect for one reason or another due to the extreme indifference shown by the state administration to the plight of the poor. This attitude is not restricted to the residents of the state but even extends .to the Commissioners of the Supreme Court. Such callousness has resulted in corruption and large scale siphoning of funds and foodgrains in majority of the schemes studied, which has resulted in providing negligible relief to many suffering for want of food. Unnecessary and avoidable factors like delay in issuing sanctions under the Annapurna, ICDS and Mid Day Meals has denied many of timely relief from hunger. In brazen disregard to Supreme Court Orders no cooked midday meals are being provided in primary schools. Considerable attention must be given to resolve the issues that lead to such irregularities in the implementation of relief to the poor.

**Annexure 1: Employment generated under SGRY II in Pindsawa (2002-03) as per returns
submitted to the Block Office**

Payments made	Nature of work	Amount Spent	Mandays generated residents Pindsawa	for of	Remarks
Babajung Road in Gangepur to inside village	Mud work to construct link road	11,558		80	Mandays returned but the given days. tractor
Nandlal Mauryas house to pond in the north	Construction of drain (Nali)	3,136		88	Er
Kamruddins house to panchayat bhawan	Construction of drain (Nali)	5,040		126	gene
Lal bahadurs house to Pond	Construction of drain (Nali)	4,480		117	
Babajung road in Paltupur to Munnulals house	Mud work to construct link road	5,250		0	Done by trolley
Shahjis house via Annus house to Jiyauddins house	Mud work to construct link road	15,300		0	Done by trolley
Funds spent on cement, bricks etc		7,915		Not applicable	
Purchase and boaring of four handpumps		4,760		Not available	Likely project to visit
Planting of trees		5,010		Not available	Likely project to visit
Construction of drains, repair of (Patanja) brick road, repair of wells		24,336		Negligible	
Cash spent on maintenance of accounts		900		Not applicable	
		87,865		411	

Annexure 2: Negligible Distribution of grain to BPL households in Nindura Block

	Name	Father's name	Village	Details of according to in cards
	Pusu	Nanhe	Gangepur	Have received since July 1999
	Babu	Nanhe	Gangepur	Have received since July 1999
	Mahadev	Jagan	Gangepur	Have received since May 1999
	Jagan	Menka	Gangepur	Have received since July 1999
	Keshan	Porvai	Gangepur	Have received times since Fe
	Chandrika	Kishan	Gangepur	Have received times since Fe
	Jaganath	Mirsa	Gangepur	Have received June 1999
	Rampal	Jaganath	Gangepur	Have received since June 1999
	Madhuram	Dalai	Gangepur	Have received since June 1999
	Dalai	Gunnu	Gangepur	Have received since June 1999
	Murari	Dalai	Gangepur	Have received since June 1999
Obtained by PDS dealer	Kismtul	Not available	Nindura	Receiving be three months
	Ramnarayan	Not available	Nindura	Receiving be three months

Annexure 3: List of pensioners met in villages of Nindura Block

S No	Name	Fathers/ Husbands name	Village	Type of pension	Remarks
	Kailasha	Late Mathura Lal	Pindsawa	Widow	Had received a cheque for the first time No 3710640. However says she cannot open an account because the bank is asking for a minimum balance of Rs 300 for which she does not have the required cash. She also had to pay Rs 300 to the pradhan for getting the cheque.
	Foolmati	Late UCLA	Pindsawa	Widow	Regular sums are cut from receipts as bank charges. Also had to pay Rs 300 to the pradhan at the time of application.
	Rambharose	Shivgulam	Pindsawa	Handicap	
	Ramrati	Mewalal	Pindsawa	Old age	Dead for the last 2 months. Block office has not been intimated
	Faridan	Noor Mohammad	Pindsawa	Old age	
	Masoom Ali	Khuda Baksh	Pindsawa	Old age	
	Sabari	Ahmad Ghani	Pindsawa	Old age	
	Shivnandan	Surajdas	Pindsawa	Old age	The villagers did not know of any such person
	Janaka	Parmeshwar	Pindsawa	Old age	The villagers did not know of any such person
	Kabir Khan		Nindura	Old age	
	Abdulmajeem	Mohar Ali	Nindura	Old age	
	Haliya	Late Mansur	Nindura	Widow	Rs 100 debited by bank as bank charges

Note: Names of beneficiaries received from Block office at Nindura